

# Ten Tips from Adapting to COVID-19 in California: Preparing and Supporting Community Health Workers and *Promotores*

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California  
Health Care  
Foundation

On April 17, 2020, CHCF gathered over 80 community health worker/*promotore* (CHW/P) experts from around California representing a broad range of perspectives including payers, advocacy groups, policymakers, government, colleges/universities, and health care providers. They shared how they were supporting CHW/Ps in their work during the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is clear that more efforts will be needed to support this important workforce, here are some actions they are taking now:

## **1 Shifting CHW/P work to a virtual (phone or computer) environment**

- Conducting one-on-one meetings with clients virtually
- Conducting online classes to support clients and community members

## **2 Providing CHW/Ps with equipment needed to work from home; developing creative solutions for clients who need to access services remotely**

- Providing laptops, VPN access, and creative solutions for CHW/Ps who may have internet access
- Guiding CHW/P clients to places that they can obtain a free wireless connection if needed (e.g., pharmacy parking lots or library parking lots)

## **3 Teaching CHW/Ps ways to effectively use technology, virtual platforms, and apps to form and maintain connections and to deliver services remotely**

- Providing the tools and resources necessary to support CHW/Ps in engaging with clients virtually (e.g., revised workflows, motivational interviewing on the phone, conducting COVID-19 education)
- Training and supporting CHW/Ps in using a variety of technology and software (Zoom, Nextdoor, WhatsApp, Remind, Google Hangout, etc.)

## **4 Providing information and resources to support CHW/Ps, including training and ongoing opportunities for connection**

- Sharing information to support effective work practices including revised policies, safety updates, new protocols, and best practices and innovations
- Creating and developing trainings specific to the COVID-19 pandemic including case-based scenarios with skills, and specific safe, effective practices
- Developing virtual and online platforms for information sharing, continued learning, and professional development
- Disseminating community partner resources and policy updates to CHW/Ps

## **5 Ensuring that CHW/Ps have the support they need for self-care**

- Creating opportunities for emotional support including regular check-ins, mentoring, and networking opportunities
- Supporting CHW/Ps in coping with emotional stress, given their need to balance family and personal situations and safety versus the increasing needs of their clients and communities

## **6 Creating and updating tools to help CHW/Ps educate and support community members and patients around COVID-19**

- Developing scripts and tools for phone outreach to high-risk clients or for COVID-19 education, etc.
- Using new online tools (e.g., for case management)
- Revising curricula and models for education to be appropriate for online use (e.g., for asthma classes)

## **7 Creating culturally and linguistically appropriate educational resources for the community to support the work CHW/Ps are doing**

## **8 Increasing communication within teams**

- Conducting weekly meetings with the team to share best practices, problem solve, provide peer support, and update workflows
- Providing opportunities for CHW/Ps to communicate among themselves and with other team members so that their work and capabilities are fully being leveraged
- Set realistic expectations given current challenges
- Provide a variety of communication methods (virtual meetings, emails, online tools and resources) to continually engage and support the work

## **9 Partnering with other organizations to share and provide training, technical assistance, and resources**

## **10 Leveraging CHW/P capabilities as part of the health care delivery system**

- Supporting CHW/Ps to lead efforts to coordinate with social services and community resources
- Sharing experiences and resources with health plans and payers
- Supporting other community organizations and creating learning networks to share effective engagement strategies and emerging practices

More information about this event is available online at [www.chcf.org/covid19chw](http://www.chcf.org/covid19chw)